[연구논문]

Korean International Students' Academic Performance and Their Receptiveness to Seeking Academic Help

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Since 1965, the number of Korean immigrants entering the United States has increased exponentially. The number of "foreign-born" Koreans in the United States grew from roughly 11,000 in 1960 to more than 1 million in 2002. Koreans now make up about 0.4 percent of the total U.S. population (U.S. Census, 2000). Annual Korean immigration to the United States peaked in 1987, when nearly 36,000 Korean immigrants entered the United States. However, Korean immigration has also decreased steadily as South Korea improved its "economic, political and social situation"- making emigration "less attractive" (Noland, 2005). Contrary to Noland's claim that Korean immigration is decreasing due to the improvement of South Korea's social situation, interestingly, the number of temporary Korean immigrants has been steadily increasing. Unlike the earlier pattern of Korean immigrants, who migrated to the United States with an economic agenda, recently more Koreans are migrating to the United States with an academic agenda- that is, to acquire a better education in the United

States.

The distinction between Korean immigration and temporary Korean migration is not clearly defined, as some Korean migrants initially came to the United States for a short period and then decided to stay in the United States. On the other hand, some Koreans may have left earlier after intending to stay long-term. However, for the purpose of this research, the term "Korean immigrants" refers to the population that migrates to the United States with the purpose of staying, while Korean migrants refer to the population who temporarily stays in the United States for a specific purpose.

Although the U.S. Census lumps four different categories of the Korean immigrant population (naturalized U.S. citizens, lawful permanent residents, temporary migrants and humanitarian migrants) into one 'foreign-born Korean immigrant population,' there are great differences amongst these different types of Korean immigrants. While naturalized U.S. citizens, lawful permanent residents, and humanitarian migrants are seeking to stay in the United States permanently, this may or may not be the case for Korean temporary migrants. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security classifies the 'temporary migrant group' as "nonimmigrant admission" consisting of temporary workers and students (DHS, 2006).

Like the general Korean immigrant population, the number of Korean international students within the temporary Korean migrants has been steadily increasing since the 1960s. This is especially true in the last decade, during which Korea had the highest number of international foreign students migrating to the United States temporarily. In order for Korean international students to enter the United States, students must obtain one of two types of student visas: F-1 (academic institutions) and M-1 (non-academic institutions). In 2006, a total of 83,854 Korean international students temporarily migrated to the United States with either F-1 or M-1 visas, nearly 14.4% of the total foreign student migration (DHS, 2006).

Interestingly, though South Korea remains the country that produces the largest number of international students who

study-abroad, there is a significant difference in the number of students holding F-1 or M-1 visas. Out of the total of 83,854 Korean international students, 83,708 students (99.83%) hold type F-1 visas, while only 344 students (0.41%) hold type M-1 visas. The great majority of Korean international students are migrating to the United States to attend academic institutions, while only less than 1% of Korean international students are migrating to attend non-academic institutions.

As the number of Korean international students migrating to the United States continues to increase and these international students continue to make up a very significant portion of the total international students in the United States, the importance of understanding the experience of Korean international students in the United States is imperative. Throughout the past two decades, there have been a number of studies contributing to the understanding of how Korean international students' language proficiency is correlated to their academic success or failure. Yet up to this point, no empirical research has been conducted to explore if there are other sociological factors which may be affecting the academic outcome of Korean international students in the United States.

One reason for the lack of empirical studies on Korean international students' academic performance is the 'assumed' difficulty in distinguishing the difference between Asian American students and Korean international students. While it can be difficult to distinguish Asian American students from Korean international students, it is important to note that the two groups have very different histories, purposes, and dynamics in the United States. However, because of the existence of the "model minority" stereotype of Asian Americans, Korean students are lumped into the same 'high-achieving' group.

Despite different demographics and academic achievement gaps, Korean international students are often seen as a homogeneous group, a minority that uniformly excels in school and achieves economic mobility. However, there are significant differences in how well each Korean international student

succeeds in school amongst the Korean international student population; and no empirical research has yet explored what sociological factors may or may not be correlated to differences in academic performance among South Korean international students at the college level.

Background: The Case of South Korea

The pattern of South Korean international student migration is distinct from the pattern of other international student migrations in a number of ways. Unlike the majority of international students from European nations, South Korean international students migrating to the United States are much younger in age on average. The South Korean international student migration phenomenon is also unique in that it has created changes in both family structure (Lee and Koo, 2006) and South Korean international immigration patterns. Many South Korean international students migrate to the United States alone and at a young age, while their parents remain in South Korea. The term "Parachute children" describes these South Korean international students who were sent to the United States alone (Orellana et al, 2001:575). In other cases, one parent of a South Korean international student migrates with the student, creating a unique family formation called "Kirogi families". "Kirogi families" refers to "transnational families split across oceans for the sole purpose of children's early education" (Lee and Koo, 2006:533).

As the number of South Korean international students migrating to the United States continues to increase, and it generates unique patterns of contemporary South Korean family structures and other social phenomenon; the underlying principles that may be causing the number of South Korean international student migration to the United States to steadily increase must be explored. The educational systems in both South Korea and in the United States should be examined as push and pull factors, respectively.

Push Factor: "History of Education in Korea"

The educational system in Korea is extremely important historically (Schneider and Lee, 1990; Chang, 2001). Many scholars often heavily associate education with Korea's tradition of Confucianism (Koh, 1996). Confucianism entered Korea from China more than fifteen centuries ago, and has greatly influenced the importance of the role of education in South Korean society. Confucianism emphasizes education especially in the government, which recruits its officers and governances by a civil examination which determines one's merit by one's educational experience. "Education in traditional Korea was valued as both a means of self-cultivation and a way of achieving status and power" (Seth, 2002:9). While it is certainly a strong possibility that Confucianism influences how South Koreans conceptualize education as a means to success, some researchers also argue the opposite - that Confucianism has had a little effect on the heavy emphasis on education in South Korea (Sorensen, 1994). Regardless of the argument how much Confucianism actually influenced the contemporary education system in South Korea, it is important to note that Confucianism is not the only factor in the perceived importance of education in South Korea.

With the rapid economic expansion in South Korea after the Korean War and Independence in 1945, the South Korean education system underwent immense restructuring. Initially, the South Korean government under the Rhee Sueng Man administration heavily emphasized vocational education and focused less on the humanities, as vocational education was assumed to be more beneficial in regards to South Korea's economic development (Seth, 2002). However, the policy emphasizing vocational education failed miserably, forcing the South Korean government to seek another path to construct its educational system. As the heavy emphasis on vocational training diminished, the Rhee administration restricted the growth of private academic schools by establishing a "quota system" (Seth, 2002:114).

With the overthrow of the Rhee government in 1960, a new government under the leadership of Park Chung Hee attempted to improve education policies, yet he failed to deviate from Rhee's original policies. There was no major change to the education policy in Korea. Due to the South Korean government's efforts to advocate vocational rather than academic education in order to incorporate the education system into the initial economic development, the South Korean government restricted admission to higher education by implementing "uniform national tests" (Seth, 2002:132) in which students were placed in schools solely based on one's performance on standardized testing. However, despite the government's efforts, enrollment in higher education in South Korea continued to grow exponentially.

The "uniform national tests" created a huge wave of criticism which encouraged the government to come up with an alternative solution, called *naesin*, in 1949 (Seth, 2002: 140). Naesin was a new system which was created by South Korea's Ministry of Education in order to decrease the stress of the exams and to evaluate students' achievement by teachers' reports. However, it did not work and the uniform national tests were still enforced. Ever since the 1950s, the exam system has been the most important part of the education system, creating the South Korean term "examination hell" (*sihom chiok*) (Seth 2002, 140). The examination system in South Korea was, and still is, an extremely high-pressure system in which one test each year will determine the students' academic achievement for that year.

In 1980, the South Korean government attempted to reform the education system once again. Under the July 30 Educational Reform, the college entrance examinations were not held by individuals but by the central government. The reform again gradually implemented a "Home School Records System" (*naesin*) (Seth 2002:160). Currently, the same policies are being used. For college entrance, both an examination and the *naesin* are required. However, the chances of entering prestigious universities and colleges are still heavily dependant on

examinations alone.

The exam called Su-neung is the peak of the examination system in South Korea. Su-neung is the examination for high school graduates for attending colleges. Scoring low on the Su-neung exam does not prevent students from graduating, but the exam determines which college a student can enroll in based on his or her score. Admission to top universities and colleges is based almost entirely on the performance on standardized examinations. Considering that graduating from top South Korean universities and colleges ensures sociological factors that correlate to upper social mobility (Lee and Brinton, 1996), the pressure on students to perform well is intense, and an exceptional performance on these exams is seen as critical.

Such heavy emphasis on examinations created the social phenomena known as "*kwaoe*", or expensive private tutoring and out-of-school lessons, and a group of private lesson schools (Seth 2002: 185-186). According to the *South Korea National Statistical Office's 2007 Yearbook*, nearly 20 trillion won (25 billion dollars) was spent on private education such as kwaoe and *hagwons*. Also, each student who received private education spent on average $288 dollars per month, and spent 7.8 hours per week in private education (KNSO, 2007).

Push Factor: "Inequality in Contemporary Korean Education"

As students and parents in South Korea turned to private education such as *kwaoe* and *hagwons* for additional academic help to increase students' test scores, inequality in the South Korean private education system also became an important issue (Diem and Levy, 1997; Park, 2004; Chang, 2000; Kim, 1993). Though nearly 77% of parents were involved in their children's education, and spent on average $222 per student each month [see Table 1.], there was a great difference in the amount spent on private education and in parental involvement based on household income level. According to the *South Korea National Statistical Office's 2007 Yearbook*, there was a drastic difference in the amount of money spent on private education between

households that earned less than $1,000 a month and those that made over $7,000. On average, regardless of children's educational level, households with less than $1000 monthly income spent only $53 per child, while households with more than $7,000 monthly income spent nearly $468 per child - almost nine times more.

One can see similar patterns in the levels of parental involvement in their children's education. For example, only 36.9% of parents who made less than $1,000 a month were involved with their children's education, while 93.5% of parents who made more than $7,000 participated in their children's education. Though the average involvement of the involve total population was 77%, the percentage of parental involvement for parents who made less than $2,000 a month was greatly below the average. Interestingly, the pattern of parental involvement based on parent's education level also followed a similar trend [see Table 2.]. As parents acquired a higher level of education, the parental involvement in their children was greater. For instance, while only 36.6% of fathers and 40.5% of mothers who had less than elementary education were involved in their children's education, 88% of fathers and 89.6% of mothers who had college degrees or beyond were involved with their children's education. A similar correlation was also present in the amount of money spent on privation education based on the parent's level of education. The higher the level of education the parent acquired, the more money was spent on the children's private education.

Such inequality in the amount of money and time spent on children's private education significantly impacts the outcome of children's academic performance [see Table 3] (Won, 1977; Kim et al, 2006). While students who fell into the top 10 % grade percentile spent an average of $300 per month per student, students who were in the bottom 20% grade percentile only spent $120. The amount of parental involvement also influenced how students performed academically. While nearly 89.3% of parents of students in the top 10% grade percentile were involved in their children's education, only 51.2% of parents of

students in the bottom 20% grade percentile were involved.

Pull Factor: "Attractiveness of English Education"

In current times, with advanced technology and information, the world has become a more global economy, indicating that the frequency of relations amongst nations has been significantly increasing. The United States is one of the top countries with which the South Korean government does business, and the ability to speak English has been exceedingly important to South Koreans. For instance, in 2007 alone, South Korea spent nearly $37,219,301,000 importing goods from the United States while spending $45,766,102,000 exporting Korean goods to the United States. In 2007, the United States remained the top 3rd country which South Korea imported their goods from, and the top 2nd country to which South Korea exported their goods (KSIS, 2007).

Analogous to the important role of the United States in South Korea's economy, the importance of English education in South Korea has become prevalent. Not only is English as a second language required in the South Korean school system as a course, but the ability to speak proficient English is considered to be directly correlated to obtaining good jobs in South Korea. Some prestigious universities and colleges also expanded their enrollment standards so that students with high TOEFL scores can gain admission to these universities based solely on one's English ability. In addition, many professors and scholars in Korean universities and colleges received their advance degree from institutions in the West (Johnsrud, 1993); and the influence of Western influence in universities and colleges in South Korea is prevalent (Lee, 1989).

As the inequality in the South Korean education system and the importance of English proficiency increases, more students and parents are not only spending great amount of money in English education but also choosing to study abroad as an alternative method of schooling, to ensure that students can compete in a highly competitive education setting and job

market in South Korea (Park and Abelmann, 2004).

Money Spent on Private Education						
	Total	1st-6th Grades	7th-9th Grades	10th-12th Grades	Academic High School	Vocational High School
Less than $1,000	$53	$62	$54	$39	$55	$22
$1,000-1,999	$107	$123	$113	$72	$94	$39
$2,000-2,999	$177	$190	$187	$140	$166	$58
$3,000-3,999	$241	$244	$261	$213	$239	$104
$4,000-4,999	$303	$297	$325	$291	$318	$123
$5,000-5,999	$344	$323	$383	$346	$372	$156
$6,000-6,999	$388	$350	$415	$442	$470	$196
Over $7,000	$468	$416	$511	$538	$570	$201
Average	**$222**	**$227**	**$234**	**$197**	**$240**	**$67**
Parental Involvement						
Less than $1,000	36.9%	50.7%	31.8%	22.5%	25.9%	18.8%
$1,000-1,999	59.7%	75.9%	56.4%	35.1%	40.5%	27.1%
$2,000-2,999	77.0%	90.1%	74.5%	50.7%	55.9%	34.5%
$3,000-3,999	84.4%	94.3%	84.2%	62.7%	67.1%	43.9%
$4,000-4,999	89.2%	96.5%	89.5%	70.6%	74.2%	48.6%
$5,000-5,999	90.5%	96.9%	92.3%	74.7%	77.9%	52.3%
$6,000-6,999	92.7%	97.3%	93.3%	82.0%	85.1%	54.0%
Over $7,000	93.5%	97.7%	93.2%	84.2%	86.3%	61.9%
Average	**77.0%**	**88.8%**	**74.6%**	**55.0%**	**62.0%**	**33.7%**

(1 USD= 960 KRW as 6/26/08, but assumed as * 1USD=1000 KRW)

[*Table 1*. Money Spent on Private Education and Parental Involvement Based on Income]

Money Spent on Private Education					
	Total	Less than Elementary School	Middle School	High School	College and Beyond
Father	$222	$68	$99	$171	$296
Mother	$222	$84	$105	$194	$311
Parental Involvement					
Father	77.0%	36.6%	50.2%	71.7%	88.0%
Mother	77.0%	40.5%	50.4%	75.0%	89.6%

(1 USD= 960 KRW as 6/26/08, but assumed as * 1USD=1000 KRW)

[*Table 2*. Money Spent on Private Education and Parental Involvement Based on Parent's Level of Education]

Money Spent on Private Education						
	Total	1st-6th Grades	7th-9th Grades	10th-12th Grades	Academic High School	Vocational High School
Top 10%	$300	$290	$352	$268	$328	$85
11~30%	$266	$357	$302	$253	$308	$83
31~60%	$210	$203	$235	$200	$239	$67
61~80%	$159	$155	$169	$151	$185	$53
Bottom 20%	$120	$123	$112	$126	$158	$53
Average	**$222**	**$227**	**$234**	**$197**	**$240**	**$67**
Parental Involvement						
Top 10%	89.3%	94.4%	91.2%	67.0%	74.2%	45.2%
11~30%	87.0%	93.6%	87.2%	63.1%	70.7%	39.5%
31~60%	77.3%	87.7%	78.4%	55.7%	62.0%	34.0%
61~80%	62.3%	77.6%	63.0%	47.9%	54.8%	27.9%
Bottom 20%	51.2%	66.6%	46.2%	42.8%	49.5%	27.1%
Average	**77.0%**	**88.8%**	**74.6%**	**55.0%**	**62.0%**	**33.7%**

(1 USD= 960 KRW as 6/26/08, but assumed as ' 1USD=1000 KRW)

[*Table 3.* Money Spent on Private Education and Parental Involvement Based on Grade Percentiles]

Literature Review and Thesis

As mentioned earlier, South Korean international students are often seen as a homogeneous group that uniformly excels in school and achieves economic mobility. However, this simply is not the case. The circumstances and experiences of South Korean international students vary greatly, and great numbers of South Korean international students are struggling to adapt to the American educational setting. The experience of "failing" South Korean international students is marginalized and ignored, and no empirical research has been contributed to understand what sociological factors may or may not influence such differences in academic achievement amongst these students.

On the other hand, data from *South Korea National Statistical Office's 2007 Yearbook* shows the distinct effect of different social backgrounds on students' academic achievement level in South Korea. Students from more privileged social backgrounds are more likely to perform better in school and succeed academically (Robinson, 1994). Household income of the family directly correlates to the average amount of money spent on students monthly; and the average amount of money spent on students monthly also directly correlates to the academic

performance of the student. The students whose family invests more money on their education are more likely to have a better academic performance (see Table 3 above).

Because there has not been an empirical study to see whether or not the same relationship between more available resources and higher academic achievement level applies to South Korean international students in the United States, investigating such a relationship is significant to understand and contribute to South Korean international students' academic experience. In order to research how more available resources relate to higher academic achievement level, a method to measure the resources must be present.

Based on French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's *The Forms of Capital* (1986), capital is an "accumulated form of labor" (46), in which has "a potential capacity to produce profits and to reproduce itself in identical or expanded form" (46). As capital can potentially bring profits to individuals, Bourdieu divided the concept of capital into three categories: economic capital, social capital and cultural capital. These three categories of capital correspond to independent variables that may or may not influence dependent variable such as the academic achievement of South Korean international students and South Korean international students' receptiveness to seeking academic helps. The terms 'social capital' and 'cultural capital' were developed by Bourdieu and derive from the notion of 'economic capital'.

Economic Capital. The first category of capital is 'economic capital'. Economic capital simply refers to economic resources such as cash, estates, and assets which have extensive value. Unlike social capital and cultural capital, which do not decrease with use, economic capital can be deducted by spending the capital. Economic capital can be accumulated by individuals or can also be inherited through individual's relationship with others (i.e., family tie). Economic capital is valuable in that it can be exchanged for other valuables, such as goods. In the case of the experiences of South Korean international students, economic capital plays a great role in how and what types of

resources one is able to acquire. For instance, the ability to obtain *kwaoe* (private tutoring) or to attend *hagwons* (examination schools) is directly correlated to the accessibility of economic capital.

Social Capital. The second category of capital is 'social capital'. The definition of 'social capital' has been quite controversial in which the term social capital can be applied in multiple ways. However, as Bourdieu explains, social capital is resources that are based on one's group membership, relationship, social status, relationship, and social network. Bourdieu defines social capital as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu, 1986:51). A person may have social capital by birth, or this capital can also be accumulated over a period of time. Just as possession of economic capital can bring advantages, the possession of social capital can do the same. Social capital is simply "a 'credential' which entitles them [people] to credit" (Bourdieu, 1986:51). Social capital can lead individuals to gain both material and symbolic profit (Bourdieu, 1986:52). Regarding the experiences of South Korean international students, social capital is important in that it may produce advantages that can result in South Korean international students performing better in school (Collins, 2008).

Cultural Capital. Lastly, the third category of capital is 'cultural capital'. Cultural capital refers to education, knowledge, skills, and attitudes one acquires which can bring advantages. Cultural capital is similar to social capital in that it can not be deducted by use. Cultural capital is often transmitted through the family by socialization and is linked to one's habitus- patterns of one's thoughts and behaviors. Cultural capital is the "best hidden and socially most determinant educational investment" (Bourdieu, 1986:48), and cannot be transmitted directly, unlike economic or social capital, since cultural capital is "embodied capital" in which "external wealth converted into an integral part of the person, into a habitus"

(Bourdieu, 1986:48). Cultural capital can be accumulated in many ways, but mostly through domestic transmission and various components such as "the period, the society, and the social class" (Bourdieu, 1986:48). For instance, the amount of each individual's cultural capital varies among South Korean international students, as the time of arrival to the United States and length of total stay in the United States varies.

The current research is designed to adopt three different forms of capital defined by Bourdieu, and examine how each form of capitals influence the academic outcome of Korean international students and their receptiveness to academic help.

The first hypothesis is that Korean international students with more economic capital are more likely have a higher cumulative GPA and are more open to the option of seeking academic help. Because more economic capital enables individuals to obtain more resources for their academic performance such as *kwaoe* and *hagwons*, it is assumed that students with more economic capital are more likely to have had more past experience with having additional help and therefore to have better cumulative GPA. Because it is assumed that students with more economic capital already have more experience with having academic help, it is hypothesized that they are more likely to be open to the option of seeking academic help in the future if necessary.

The second hypothesis is that Korean international students with more social capital are more likely to have a higher cumulative GPA and are more likely to seek academic help. Korean international students with more social capital are hypothesized to have a higher cumulative GPA because it is assumed that social capital brings helpful resources (i.e., academic help from their friends or from the community) which enhance Korean international students' academic performance. Korean international students with more social capital are also assumed to have had more experience seeking academic help; therefore, they will be more likely to seek academic help in the future.

The third and last hypothesis is that Korean international

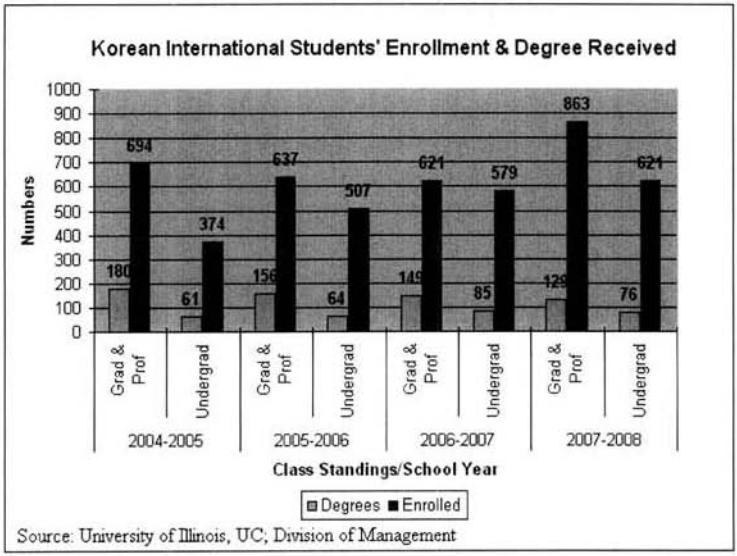
students with more Korean cultural capital are more likely to have a higher cumulative GPA and are more open to the option of seeking academic help. The hypothesis is that Korean international students who came to the United States at a later age and have more Korean cultural capital are more likely to have a higher cumulative GPA and are more open to the option of seeking academic help. Such a hypothesis is based on an assumption that students who came to the United States at a later age have better studying habits and are encouraged to have more emphasis on education as it is in Korea.

THE CASE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS, URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

According to the Institute of International Education, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign ranked fourth in the 2006-2007 academic year for hosting the most international students after the University of Southern California, Columbia University and New York University. In the 2006-2007 academic year, UIUC hosted 5,685 international students which consisted of nearly 13.75% of the total student body (IIE, 2007). However, when the number of Korean international students is only accounted; UIUC hosted the most Korean international students in 2006-2007. In the 2006-2007 academic year, UIUC hosted 508 Korean international undergraduate students and 641 Korean international graduate students totaling 1,149 Korean international students overall (IIE, 2007).

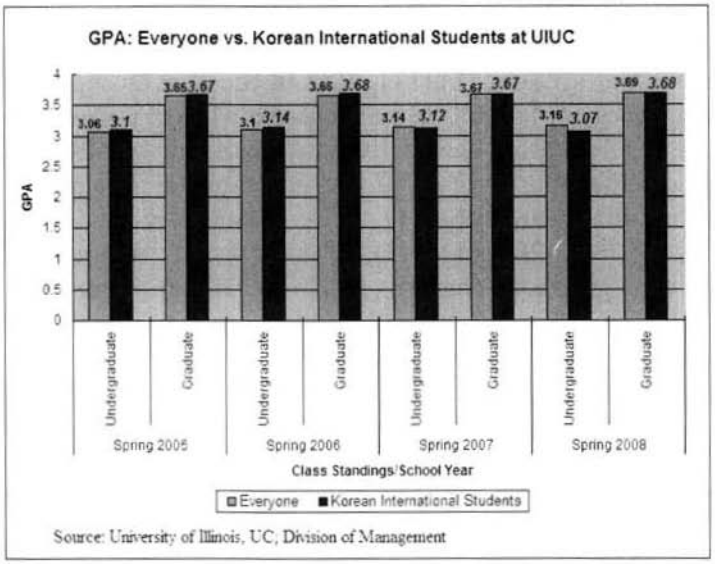
The number of total Korean international students at UIUC has been steadily increasing over the years. However, while the number of Korean international graduate students overall remained consistent; the number of Korean international undergraduate students has been increasing rapidly. In 2004-2005, there were only 374 Korean international students enrolled at UIUC. Yet, each year the number of Korean international undergraduate students rose to 507 in 2005-2006; 579 in 2006-2007 and 621 in 2007-2008. Over just four academic years, the

number of Korean international undergraduate students almost doubled (see Table 4).



[*Table 4*: Korean International Students' Enrollment & Degree Received at UIUC]

As the number of Korean international undergraduate students significantly increased in the past couple years, the average GPA for Korean international undergraduate students also changed. And while the average GPA of Korean graduate students remained the same over the years, the average GPA of Korean undergraduate students changed. For instance, in Spring 2007 and in Spring 2008; the average GPA of Korean international students was lower than the overall GPA for all undergraduate students at UIUC (see Table 5). As the number of Korean international students continues to increase at UIUC and in the United States, the empirical research to understand Korean international students' academic experience has become exceedingly important.



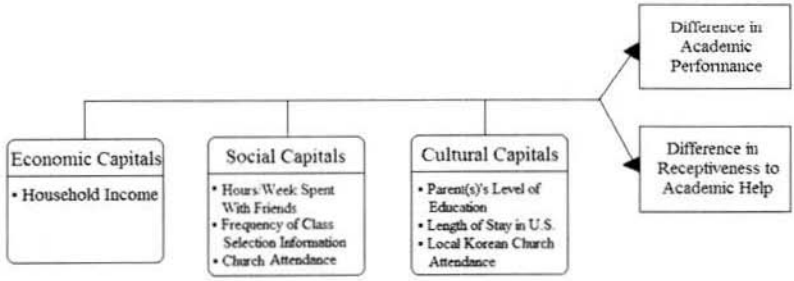
[*Table 5*. Korean International Students' Average GPA at UIUC]

DATA ANAYSIS

Sample & Method

Because the list of the population of all Korean international students at the University of Illinois, in Urbana-Champaign, was not available, the sample was conducted in order to examine the Korean international students' academic experience and their receptiveness to academic help. The research was conducted in the summer of 2008 in which a great number of Korean international students were not present on campus during the research. In order to extend the research to all willing participants regardless of their location, the survey was conducted in two forms: on-campus surveys and internet surveys. The on-line version of the survey was distributed via the Korean Student Association Website and another survey was distributed to Korean international students remaining at the

UIUC campus during summer 2008. 47 Korean international students participated in the on-campus survey while 41 Korean international students participated in the survey via internet, totaling 88 samples. Of 88 participants, 45 participants were female (51.14%) and 43 participants were male (48.86%). In terms of class standings, the present sample consisted of 88 students with 1 freshman (1.14%), 28 sophomores (31%), 16 juniors (18.18%), 26 seniors (29.55%), 5 5th year seniors (5.68%), 2 first-year graduate students (2.27%), 2 second-year graduate students (2.27%) and 8 more-than-three-year graduate students (9.09%). The sample consisted of 6 U.S. citizens[1] (6.82%), 5 U.S. permanent residents[2] (5.68%), and 77 Korean nationals with F-1/F-2 type of visa (87.5%). The participants were ranged from 18 to 35 years of age, with a mean age of 22.91 (SD= 2.80). They reported that they had been in the United States for an average of 5.06 years (SD= 2.21). Later, 6 interviews were conducted in order to obtain more in-depth narratives of Korean international students.



[*Figure 1.* The operational model of Coding]

1. Participants came to the United States within the range of 2 to 6 years ago and considered themselves as Korean International students regardless of their U.S. citizenships.
2. Participants came to the United States within the range of 4 to 11 years ago and considered themselves as Korean International students regardless of their U.S. permanent residency.

Coding

The participants' survey answers were coded by the researcher for three main themes: economic capital, social capital and cultural capital. Korean international students' economic capital was measured by self-reported measure of household income. Five categories were provided in the survey: lower income, lower-middle income, middle income, upper-middle income, and upper income. However, because no participants self-reported being in the lower income category, that category was excluded for the data analysis. The distribution of participants for each of the four categories was not evenly distributed, but each category contained enough sample size to be analyzed. Number 1 was assigned to "low-middle income"; number 2 was assigned to "middle income"; number 3 was assigned to "upper-middle income"; and number 4 was assigned to "upper income", respectively.

Korean international students' social capital is measured by three different independent variables (see Figure 1 above). In order to accurately measure the volume of social capital of each Korean international student, the social capital scale is developed in the research. Because three different independent variables were used to measure the individual's amount of social capital, each independent variable was coded into numerical values then added up for the net total of social capital. The first independent valuable used is number of hours per week each Korean international student reported he or she spent with his or her friends. This is measured as interval-ratio level in which the actual number each student reported is used as the actual value. The second independent variable used is the frequency of how often each student exchanges information about class selection. The scale of 1 (never) to 5 (always) was used in the survey, and is also used as actual value for the Social Capital Scale. The third independent variable used is the frequency of church attendance. Korean international students were asked to report how often they attend a local church. 5 different categories were used for the report and coding: (1)

Never, (2) Occasionally, (3) Once or twice a month, (4) Every week, and (5) More than once a week. The net total of these three independent variables are used for the Social Capital Scale, and ranged from 7 to 48 with the mean of 22.16 (SD=9.77).

Similar to the development of the Social Capital Scale, four different independent variables were used to create a Cultural Capital Scale. Because cultural capital is accumulated mostly by the domestic transmission with various components such as "the period, the society, and the social class" (Bourdieu, 1986:48); four independent variables father's level of education, mother's level of education, length of stay in the United States, and attendance of Korean church were used to measure Korean international students' cultural capital as many studies show the important role of Korean churches in Korean immigrants' lives in the United States (Kim and Hurh, 1990; Kwon et al, 1997). Both father's and mother's level of education was measured and assigned numbers from low to high: (1) Middle school/Junior High school, (2) High school, (3) Junior college, (4) 4-year College, and (5) Masters and beyond. Each Korean international student's length of stay was placed into one of three categories by number of years and assigned numbers from 1 to 3. Students who have been in the U.S. from 1 to 4 years were assigned 3, students who have been in the U.S. from 5~6 years were assigned 2, and students who have stayed in the U.S. for longer than 7 years were assigned 1. Because it is assumed that Korean international students who migrated to the United States at later age have more Korean cultural capital, the numbers were assigned accordingly. Each Korean student who attended Korean church was assigned a value of 1 indicating that students who attended local Korean churches are more likely to have more Korean cultural capital. Though there are few researches that show the correlation between high TOEFL score and Korean international students' academic success (Light et al, 1987); the TOEFL score was not included in the study because the correlation between high TOEFL score and international students' academic performance is quite controversial (Johnson, 1988). Korean international students' TOEFL score was not

included in the study also because English proficiency does not necessarily indicate the amount of cultural capital that Korean international students acquire.

Data Analyses

The research first examines how the amount of economic capital Korean international students have is related to their academic performance (measured by cumulative GPA) and their receptiveness to seeking academic help. Second, the relation between the amount of social capital Korean international students have and their academic performance and their receptiveness to seeking academic help was examined. Lastly, the research examines how the amount of cultural capital Korean international students have is related to their academic performance and their receptiveness to seeking academic help. Due to the exploratory nature of the research, frequency tables were calculated to demonstrate the differences in academic performance and receptiveness to academic help according to the different forms of capital. Paired t-tests were conducted in order to see if the differences in GPAs were statistically significant. Later, chi-square tests and regression tests were conducted to examine whether or not the academic performance of Korean international students was dependent on different forms of capital.

RESULTS

Economic Capital

In terms of the economic capital, the cumulative GPA significantly varied by the amount of Korean international students' economic capital. From the survey data, Korean international students with different amounts of economic capital reported different cumulative GPAs. Korean international students with upper income level reported an average cumulative GPA of 3.5143 (SD=0.1574); and Korean

international students with upper-middle income reported an average cumulative GPA of 3.3524 (SD= 0.3789). Korean international students with middle income reported an average cumulative GPA of 3.1561 (SD=0.3107) and Korean international students with lower-middle income reported an average cumulative GPA of 2.9867 (SD=0.4749) (see Table 6 below).

The research also found that Korean international students with more economic capital are more likely to have had past experience with receiving academic help, such as *kwaoe* and *hagwons*. While 100% of Korean international students with upper income reported to have received different types of academic help, only 33.33% of Korean international students with lower-middle income have reported to have received any academic help. 81.82% of Korean international students with upper-middle income and 66.67% of Korean international students with middle income reported to have received any academic help in the past.

Similar to the report of their past experience with seeking academic help, Korean international students with more economic capital reported that they will seek academic help in the future if necessary. While 100% of Korean international students with upper income reported that they will actively seek academic help if needed, only 60% of Korean international students with lower-middle income reported that they will seek any help. Correspondingly, 90.91% Korean international students with upper-middle income and 87.88% of Korean international students with middle income reported that they will seek academic help if necessary.

	Economic Capital			
	Lower-middle	Middle	Upper-middle	Upper
	N= 15	N= 33	N= 33	N= 7
Cumulative GPA	**2.9867**	**3.1561**	**3.3524**	**3.5143**
Academic Experience in the Past				
Yes	**5** (33.33%)	**22** (66.67%)	**27** (81.82%)	**7** (100%)
No	**10** (66.67%)	**11** (33.33%)	**6** (18.18%)	**0** (0%)
Receptiveness				
Yes	**9** (60%)	**29** (87.88%)	**30** (90.91%)	**7** (100%)
No	**6** (40%)	**4** (12.12%)	**3** (9.09%)	**0** (0%)

[*Table 6*: Cumulative GPA, Academic Experience, and Receptiveness by Economic Capital]

Social Capital

In terms of social capital, the cumulative GPA significantly varied by the amount of Korean international students' social capital. From the survey data, Korean international students with different amounts of social capital reported different cumulative GPAs. While Korean international students with low social capital scores (7~15.5 points) reported an average cumulative GPA of 3.0375 (SD= 0.5086), Korean international students with middle social capital scores (16~24.5 points) reported an average cumulative GPA of 3.2406 (SD=0.3109). Korean international students with high social capital scores (more than 25 points) had an average cumulative GPA of 3.4082 (SD=0.2116) (see Table 7 below).

The research also found that Korean international students with higher social capital scores are more likely to have had some type of academic help in the past. While 100% of Korean international students with high social capital have received academic help in the past, only 78% of Korean international students with middle social capital scores and only 28.57% of Korean international students have received academic help in the past.

A similar pattern also emerged in terms of their receptiveness to seeking academic help in the future. Nearly 96.43% of Korean international students with high social capital scores have reported that they will seek academic help in the future if necessary while only 84.38% of Korean international students with middle social capital scores and 75% of Korean international students with low social capital scores have reported that they will seek academic help.

	Social Capital Scale		
	Low	Middle	High
	7~15.5	16~24.5	25~48
	N= 28	N= 32	N=28
Cumulative GPA	**3.0375**	**3.2406**	**3.4082**
Academic Experience in the Past			
Yes	**8** (28.57%)	**25** (78.13%)	**28** (100%)
No	**20** (71.43%)	7 (21.88%)	**0** (0%)
Receptiveness			
Yes	**21** (75%)	**27** (84.38%)	**27** (96.43%)
No	7 (25%)	**5** (15.63%)	**1** (3.57%)

[*Table 7*: Cumulative GPA, Academic Experience, and Receptiveness by Social Capital]

Cultural Capital

In terms of the cultural capital, the cumulative GPA significantly varied by the amount of Korean international students' cultural capital. While Korean international students with low Korean cultural capital scores (6~9 points) reported an average cumulative GPA of 2.896 (SD= 0.3963), Korean international students with middle cultural capital scores (10~11 points) reported an average cumulative GPA of 3.2878 (SD=0.2989). Korean international students with high cultural capital scores (12~14 points) had an average cumulative GPA of 3.4665 (SD=0.2958) (see Table 8 below).

The research also found that Korean international students are more open to the possibility of seeking academic help. 84.62% of Korean international students with high cultural capital scores indicated that they have received academic help in the past whereas only 40% of Korean international students with low cultural capital scores reported that they have had any academic help. The Korean international students' receptiveness to seeking academic help in the future also had a similar pattern in that 96.15% of Korean international students with high cultural capitals were open to seeking academic help while 68% of Korean international students with low cultural capital scores indicated that they will seek academic help in the future if necessary.

	Cultural Capital Score		
	Low	Middle	High
	6~9	10~11	12~14
	N= 25	N= 37	N= 26
Cumulative GPA	2.896	3.2878	3.4665
Academic Experience in the Past			
Yes	10 (40%)	29 (78.38%)	22 (84.62%)
No	15 (60%)	8 (21.62%)	4 (15.38%)
Receptiveness			
Yes	17 (68%)	33 (89.19%)	25 (96.15%)
No	8 (32%)	4 (10.81%)	1 (3.85%)

[*Table 8*: Cumulative GPA, Academic Experience, and Receptiveness by Cultural Capital]

After initial data analysis, paired t-tests were conducted in order to confirm that the differences in GPA found in the research were statistically significant. All three different forms of capital (economic, social and cultural capital) had great differences in students' cumulative GPA depending on the amount of different capitals; and the paired t-tests confirmed that these differences are statistically significantly different. For economic capital, the difference of GPA was significant at confidence level of 95%; and for both social and cultural capital, the difference of GPA was significant at confidence level of 99.9% (see Table 9 below).

	Capital				t-test for Difference in Means			
Forms of Capital	Lower-Middle	Middle	Upper-Middle	Upper	Lower-Middle vs. Middle	Middle vs. Upper-Middle	Upper-Middle vs. Upper	Lower-Middle vs. Upper
Economic								
Household Income	2.99	3.16	3.35	3.51	t = -1.39	t = -2.43*	t = -3.50*	t = -9.64*
	Low		Medium	High	Low vs. Med		Med vs. High	Low vs. High
Social								
Exchanging of Class Information	2.93		3.33	3.66	t = 4.46***		t = 4.17***	t = 8.69***
Frequency of Church Attendance	2.97		3.27	3.45	t = -3.80**		t = -1.79	t = -5.73***
Time Spent with Friends per Week	3.10		3.27	3.38	t = -1.47*		t = -2.27	t = -1.51
Social Capital Score	3.04		3.24	3.41	t = -1.62		t = -2.44*	t = -4.03***
Cultural								
Parents Education	2.90		3.25	3.55	t = -1.38		t = -6.02***	t = -5.95***
Length of Stay in U.S.	3.35		3.47	3.58	t = 2.14*		t = -0.77	t = 1.80
Korean Church Attendance	2.98			3.38				t = 4.69***
Cultural Capital Score	2.90		3.29	3.47	t = -4.45***		t = -2.02**	t = -5.21***

*p <0.05; **p< 0.01; ***p< 0.001

[*Table 9*. Pair T-tests for Difference in Means for Different Forms of Capital]

The chi-square tests and regression tests indicate that cumulative GPA of Korean international students are dependent

on different forms of capital at a confidence level of 95%. The standardized coefficient betas indicate that by knowing the amount of different capitals Korean international students acquired, the ability to predict Korean international students' academic performance improves. For instance, by knowing the amount of economic capital of Korean international students; the ability to predict their academic performance can be improved by 40.2%. The standardized coefficient betas also indicate that the cultural capital has the most influence on Korean international students' academic performance (see Table 10 below).

Forms of Capital	χ^2	SE (χ^2)	β	SE (β)	R	Exp (β)
Economic Capital	75.66	0.028	-0.182	0.000	0.402	-0.402
Social Capital	732.2	0.003	0.015	0.000	0.368	0.368
Cultural Capital	197.9	0.002	0.141	0.000	0.626	0.626

[*Table 10.* Chi-square Tests and Regression Tests for Different Forms of Capital]

Limitations

Several limitations of the research must be noted. First, because the survey was distributed online via the Korean Student Association website and to Korean international students who remained on campus for summer 2008, the sample size of the population was small. Second, because the survey was conducted at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, the findings cannot necessarily be generalized for other geographic locations.

Methodologically, the research was limited by the small sample size and by the skewed data collection. The research was also limited by the nature of survey questions. Many Korean international students did not provide their cumulative GPA, and therefore their samples were disqualified from the research. Also, due to the nature of the research, Korean international students who did have academic problems were less likely to participate in the research, which is a factor for less reliable

results.

However, due to a lack of pre-existing relevant research on the topic and the exploratory nature of the study, this research offers important insights into Korean international students' academic experience in a higher educational setting. The research also offers important insights into Korean international students' academic performance and their receptiveness to seeking academic help. Future research should consider developing other valid and reliable measures to contribute more knowledge to this topic of research.

Discussion and Implication

There were several important findings regarding the effect of different forms of capital on Korean international students' academic performances and their receptiveness to seeking academic help. First, Korean international students with more economic capital were more likely to have a higher cumulative GPA and were also more likely to seek academic help. However, there was a great difference in whether or not Korean international students have had experience with academic help in the past and whether or not they will seek academic help in the future, especially for Korean international students with a lower-middle economic capital. While 60% of Korean international students with a lower-middle economic capital indicated that they will seek academic help in the future if needed, only 33.33% of them have had experience seeking academic help in the past.

Similar patterns also emerged for subgroups of Korean international students regarding the amount of their social and cultural capital. Korean international students with more social and cultural capital were more likely to have higher cumulative GPAs and were more open to the possibility of seeking academic help. They also have had more experiences with receiving academic help in the past.

The research indicates that Korean international students' academic performances vary greatly by the amount of different

capitals they have. Since Korean international students are often perceived as a homogeneous group that is academically succeeding, and their problems are often marginalized, more attention should be paid to Korean international students so that academically struggling Korean international students will not be overlooked. Because there is a significant difference in accessibility to different academic resources by different amounts of acquired capitals, more effort must be made in order to ensure that academic resources are accessible to all Korean international students, regardless of their economic, social, and cultural capitals.

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[Abstract]

Korean International Students' Academic Performance and Their Receptiveness to Seeking Academic Help

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This article examines the migration patterns of Korean international students in the United States; and their academic performance proficiency based on different characteristics of Korean international students. This article adopts the concepts of different forms of capital developed by the sociologist Pierce Bourdieu in order to examine the correlation between the amounts of different capital and Korean international students' academic performance. It describes that there are significant differences in Korean international students' academic performance based on the different economic, social, and cultural capital they acquire. It describes that different amounts of acquired capital do not only affect Korean international students' academic performances but also their perception into seeking academic help.

Key Words: Korean international students, academic performance, capital, empirical research